

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NOON PRESS BRIEFINGS JUNE 6 AND 7: VISIT
OF GDR FOREIGN MINISTER FISCHER AND GDR ACTIVITIES IN
AFRICA

1. THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE JUNE 6 NOON
PRESS BRIEFING THAT RELATE TO THE VISIT OF GDR FOREIGN
MINISTER FISCHER AND GDR ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA:

Q: HAVE YOU SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISCUSSION THE
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SECRETARY HAD THIS MORNING WITH THE EAST GERMAN
FOREIGN MINISTER?

A: I HAVE A LITTLE BIT. I BELIEVE THAT THE EAST
GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAD A FEW THINGS TO SAY
WHEN HE LEFT THE MEETING, AND I AM NOT GOING TO GO
BEYOND THE CHARACTERIZATIONS THAT HE MADE.

THE MINISTER WAS IN NEW YORK YESTERDAY ATTENDING THE SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT WHICH WAS THE PRIMARY A;M OF HIS VISIT TO THE COUNTRY, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT.

AT HIS REQUEST, THE MINISTER'S, A MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE WAS ARRANGED, AS YOU KNOW, THIS MORNING. IN ADDITION, DURING HIS STAY HERE IN WASHINGTON, MR. FISCHER WILL MEET WITH THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE AS WELL AS THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

Q: DID THE SECRETARY RAISE WITH HIM THE ROLE OF EAST GERMANY IN TRAINING THE INVADERS FROM ANGOLA?

A: I DON'T HAVE AN INDICATION OF THAT.

Q: DID THE GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER, BY ANY CHANCE, TELL THE SECRETARY THAT THERE WERE NO CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA?

A: I HEARD REPORTS OF THAT BEING SAID PUBLICLY. I AM NOT REALLY AWARE. AND THE REASON IS, NOT TO BE CUTE ABOUT IT, I DON'T HAVE A READ-OUT FROM THE SECRETARY HIMSELF. HE HAD TO RUN OFF TO A MEETING.
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Q: COULD YOU TRY AND GET ONE, BECAUSE WHAT FISCHER SAID COMING OUT OF HERE WAS RATHER EXTRAORDINARY AND NEWS-MAKING, AND --

A: NO CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA.

Q: YES.

A: YOU WANT ME TO ASK WHETHER HE SAID THAT TO THE SECRETARY? I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I WILL BE ABLE TO GET THAT.

Q: I UNDERSTAND THAT HE DID SAY IT.

A: I UNDERSTAND. LET ME SAY IF HE DID SAY IT, WE WOULD REITERATE WHAT THE CUBANS HAVE SAID, WHICH IS THAT THEY ARE PRESENT IN ETHIOPIA IN NUMBERS.

Q: HODDING, HOW DO YOU GET THE TWO MEN TOGETHER AND THE QUESTION DOESN'T COME UP ABOUT EAST GERMAN ACTIVITY IN AFRICA? I MEAN, WHEN THE UNITED STATES,

AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL --

A: ARE YOU ASKING ME THAT QUESTION SERIOUSLY?

Q: YES, I AM ASKING YOU SERIOUSLY.

A: BECAUSE THEY MAY HAVE HAD OTHER THINGS THAT THEY WANTED TO DISCUSS MORE. IN ANY CASE, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THE QUESTION CAME UP, AND THEREFORE, I WILL FIND OUT AND THEN YOU CAN ASK ME THE QUESTION.

Q: THAT'S BETTER. (LAUGHTER)

Q: HODDING, WHAT IS THE STATE OF YOUR INFORMATION ABOUT EAST GERMAN ACTIVITY.

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A: I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT.

Q: WHILE YOU ARE CHECKING ON THE MEETING WITH THE EAST GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER, CAN YOU CHECK ALSO ON THE QUESTION THAT WAS RAISED WHEN THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND EAST GERMANY WERE ESTABLISHED, CONCERNING EAST GERMANY'S READINESS TO PARTICIPATE IN PAYING COMPENSATION OR REPARATIONS TO VICTIMS.?

A: I HAVE HERE AN ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE WHICH MAKES ME BELIEVE THAT IT WAS ON THE AGENDA, THAT QUESTIONS ABOUT OUTSTANDING CLAIMS WERE DISCUSSED. THEY WERE ON THE AGENDA, AT ANY RATE -- TRADE RELATIONS AND HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS, FAMILY REUNIFICATION OBVIOUSLY LEADING THE LIST IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM. THOSE WERE EXPECTED. I WOULD EXPECT THAT THEY WERE DEFINITELY DISCUSSED. BUT I WILL SEE WHETHER I HAVE A BETTER GUIDANCE. AS I SAY, HE LEFT RATHER SOON.

2. THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS ON THE SAME SUBJECTS FROM THE JUNE 7 NOON PRESS BRIEFING:

Q: EAST GERMANY? IS THE ADMINISTRATION, AS A RESULT OF MR. FISCHER'S VISIT, CONSIDERING A HUNGARIAN TYPE OR ROMANIAN TYPE SPECIAL TRADE RELATIONSHIP FOR EAST GERMANY?

A: NO.

Q: DID THE SECRETARY RAISE THE EAST GERMAN'S INTENTIONS IN AFRICA YESTERDAY, AND WHAT RESPONSE DID HE
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GET?

A: DID THE SECRETARY ASK ABOUT GDR ACTIVITIES ANYWHERE ELSE IN AFRICA? ANSWER: YES, HE DID. AND MR. FISCHER CLAIMED THAT IN AFRICA THE GDR IS INVOLVED SOLELY IN TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE IN ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL AREAS.

THE SECRETARY DID ASK MR. FISCHER ABOUT REPORTS OF POSSIBLE GDR ACTIVITIES IN THE TRAINING OF THE INSURGENTS WHO WENT INTO ZAIRE. MR. FISCHER DENIED ANY SUCH INVOLVEMENT.

THE QUESTION OF CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA DID NOT COME UP IN THE DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER. I AM AWARE, HOWEVER, OF THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS MADE BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY AND AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB.

IN REPLY TO THOSE STATEMENTS, I WOULD MERELY REITERATE THAT CUBAN TROOPS ARE PRESENTLY IN ETHIOPIA IN SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS AND HAVE PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THE FIGHTING.

Q: WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE EAST GERMAN ROLE IN AFRICA?

A: BEYOND WHAT?

Q: DOES IT CONTRADICT WHAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD THE SECRETARY?

A: I DON'T HAVE A READ-OUT ON THAT. I AM NOT SURE THAT I WILL. OBVIOUSLY THEY HAVE MISSIONS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER, BUT I DON'T HAVE A SPECIFIC READING ON IT.
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Q: HODDING, WHY DID THE SECRETARY OF STATE MEET WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF EAST GERMANY?

A: THEY REQUESTED A MEETING. IT SEEMED TO BE AN APPROPRIATE THING TO DO.

Q: WHY WAS IT APPROPRIATE? I MEAN, YOU ARE IN A PERIOD OF CONFLICT WITH THE RUSSIANS AND --

A: I THOUGHT THAT SPEECH THIS MORNING WAS SUPPOSED TO PROPOSE THE ALTERNATIVES AND THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE EAST GENERALLY. AND AMONG THEM ARE WE CONTINUE TO TALK --

Q: THERE HAS BEEN MORE CONFRONTATION OF LATE THAN THERE HAS BEEN COMPETITION. WHAT DO YOU GAIN DIPLOMATICALLY BY TALKING TO THE EAST GERMANS?

A: WE GAIN WHAT WE HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT WE GAIN BY TALKING, WHICH IS A CLOSER EXPLORATION OF EACH OTHER'S VIEWS, THE POSSIBILITY OF RECONCILIATION OF OPPOSING VIEWS, A RECOGNITION OF THE EXISTENCE OF BOTH FORCES, AN ATTEMPT TO MOVE A PROCESS FORWARD WHICH CAN BE OF BENEFIT TO BOTH SIDES.

Q: HODDING, YOU OBSERVED A MINUTE AGO THAT THE CUBANS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE FIGHTING IN ETHIOPIA. WAS THAT MEANT TO BE PAST TENSE, OR ARE THEY STILL PARTICIPATING?

A: YES. I AM NOT SUGGESTING ANYTHING NOW. AS A UNCLASSIFIED

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MATTER OF FACT, I DON'T HAVE ANY REPORTS OF ACTUAL COMBAT ROLE RIGHT NOW.

Q: DID MR. FISCHER'S DENIAL THAT THERE ARE ANY CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA CAST ANY DOUBT IN YOUR MIND ON THE DENIAL THAT THERE WERE ANY EAST GERMANS INVOLVED IN ZAIRE?

A: I DON'T HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THAT AT ALL.

Q: HODDING, THERE HAS BEEN ONE REPORT IN THE LONDON OBSERVER ABOUT EAST GERMAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE ZAIRE INVASION.

A: I SAW THAT.

Q: DR. BRZEZINSKI ALLUDED TO IT, I GUESS TEN DAYS AGO, IN AN INTERVIEW.

I AM WONDERING, DOES THE UNITED STATES HAVE ANY INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OR ANY REASON OF ITS OWN TO BELIEVE THAT THE EAST GERMANS ARE INDEED INVOLVED?

I AM NOT ASKING YOU FOR THE INFORMATION ITSELF, BUT
ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT THEY MAY HAVE HAD A ROLE?

A: I DON'T THINK I AM PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THAT
QUESTION.

Q: CAN YOU TAKE IT?

A: YES. I WILL SEE WHAT I CAN DO. I HAVE GREAT
DOUBTS THAT WE HAVE MUCH ON IT.
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